

Legislative Issue Brief – Secondary Roads



Catawba County Board of Commissioner's Legislative Goal

Oppose transferring the responsibility of North Carolina's secondary road infrastructure to counties – the elimination or decrease in current road infrastructure funding levels for municipalities or the transfer of any State maintained roads to municipalities

Background

As the State of North Carolina looks to update and increase its road infrastructure, various funding and road responsibility options have been discussed. Catawba County opposes any State options that redirect State road responsibilities to counties. Additionally, the County opposes all attempts to eliminate or decrease State transportation funds for municipalities (e.g. Catawba County's municipalities received a total of \$2,098,686.71 in Powell Bill funding in FY 2008-2009). During the State's FY 2009-2010 budget process, the Powell Bill was reduced statewide by 30.3%, which is expected to have a significant impact on municipalities.

Catawba County opposes any attempts by the State of North Carolina to shift the responsibility of any State roads to municipalities. Current law allows municipalities to individually negotiate with the Department of Transportation when considering the transfer of a road to a municipality. The current process is working well and should remain.

If the County was given the responsibility of secondary road maintenance, the price tag for Catawba County could reach \$5.9 million annually, based on the current State Department of Transportation budget for road maintenance in Catawba County. This would require a 3.9 cent increase on the County's property tax rate.

The addition of new revenue options for North Carolina in 2007 (1/4 cent sales tax and land transfer tax) were not intended to be a gateway for additional unfunded state mandates like the responsibility of secondary road maintenance. These revenue options were meant to help fund existing county responsibilities such as: water/sewer, economic development, court facilities, and public safety infrastructure. Any attempt to force road responsibilities on counties, justified by increased revenue options, would only create larger fiscal problems for counties and increase property taxpayers' burden.

Senate Bill 758 was introduced during the 2009 Long Session. If adopted, it would remove the secondary roads from the State Highway System and transfer responsibility of construction and maintenance to counties. The Bill did not move beyond committee, but remains eligible for consideration during the 2010 Short Session.

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